

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala protect and preserve him),
Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 14)

Some Events from 1955 and 1956

Our respected father's (May Allah's mercy be upon him) life was one of continuous struggle. After coming to Pakistan he was ever-absorbed with the concern that Pakistan should become a beautiful model of its purpose of creation, i.e. the implementation of Islam. For this, he wished for such a constitution to be implemented in the country which reflected Islamic teachings. Due to this he was ever-at odds with the secular circles of the country. On the other hand, the teaching and administrative responsibilities of Darul Uloom required dedicated time. The task of writing Fatwas was on top, which did not stop at any time. The daily routine of giving a *Dars-e-Quran* (Lesson of the Quran) after Fajr in Masjid Babul Islam was never missed, and later on he also gave lessons on Radio Pakistan every Friday titled *Maariful Quran*. Depending on the needs of the country, he also continued writing books and articles. In the field of *Tasawwuf* and *Sulook*, in order to pass on the trust which was bestowed on him by Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Sahab Thanvi (May Allah's mercy be upon him), he gave an *Islahi* (focussing on reformation of one's morals) talk every Sunday, and responding to letters from seekers of *Sulook* was an additional task. Family issues were on top of all these. And for all these matters he also had to travel frequently, which also consumed time.

But especially the years 1955 and 1956 brought numerous challenges for our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him), and several significant events transpired in these years, which seem appropriate to mention individually.

The Struggle for the Constitution of Pakistan

The Constitution, for the preparation which our respected father had spent endless days and nights, was in its final stages. And our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was continuously holding meetings and dialogues with the relevant stakeholders to improve it as much as possible.

In the first three months after coming to Pakistan our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him), together with Hazrat Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani Sahab and Dr Hameedullah Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon them both), had drawn up a draft outline of the Constitution. Thereafter the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan formed a department called

the “Islamic Education Board” and annexed it to the Assembly. This department was working with Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi Sahab (May Allah’s mercy be upon him) as its President, and our respected father was a core member. From its inception, certain quarters in Pakistan were unwilling to give it an Islamic identity at any cost, and wished to bring a secular constitution in the country. Aimed at this, one propaganda being spread was that Muslims have many sects which would never collectively agree to a single version of the Constitution. To counter this, scholars from all schools of thought decided to jointly define the Islamic foundations of the Constitution. To this end Hazrat Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Sahab Thanvi (May Allah’s mercy be upon him), with cooperation from other scholars, convened a meeting of 33 scholars, in which Deobandi, Bareilvi, Ahl-e-Hadith and Shia scholars participated. These scholars unanimously agreed to 22 points for the Constitution of Pakistan, which were a major milestone in the religio-political struggle in the country. Thereafter, when the government presented its proposals in the Nazimuddin Report regarding the Constitution, another meeting of these 33 scholars was convened in which amendments to this Report were unitedly agreed by scholars of all schools of thought, which were then compiled and published. Finally, in the draft Constitution of 1954, most of the proposals of the Islamic Education Board were accepted, but Governor General Ghulam Muhammad dismissed the Constitutional Assembly and brought the matter back to square one. And during the preparation of the new Constitution, disputes with the secular quarters restarted.

One propaganda from their side was that acting (or not) upon Islamic commandments was one’s personal matter, and the state should not interfere in this. In support of this, it was even claimed that the noble Quran is devoid of any guidance regarding national laws. In response to this our respected father (May Allah’s mercy be upon him) wrote a detailed booklet titled “Quranic Constitution” in which he compiled, together with their detailed explanation, those verses of the Quran in which clear guidance regarding national laws is provide. Subsequently, the propaganda was raised that if the State was made Islamic the rights of the minority non-Muslims could not be protected. In response to this, our respected father (May his secret be sanctified) wrote a booklet titled “Rights of non-Muslims in an Islamic State”. These booklets were also translated into English, and then thousands of copies were published, and also sent to members of the Assembly and other powerful state officials. They helped in orientating the mindsets of members of the Assembly.

Before the partition of India, Shaykhul Islam Hazrat Allama Shabbir Ahmad Sahab Usmani (May Allah’s mercy be upon him) had created the Jamiyat Ulama-e-Islam in order to unite the efforts of Islamic scholars in the Pakistan Movement. This organization had breathed life into the Movement and played a vital role in attaining Pakistan. After the creation of Pakistan, this Jamiyat continued to work for the implementation of an Islamic Constitution and Islamic laws under the chairmanship of Hazrat himself. After his demise, Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Sulaiman

Nadvi (May Allah's mercy be upon him) became its president, and after his death Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon them all). For most of the time our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) served as its Vice President and later, due to the weakness and handicap of Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), he was made its acting President. Since in those days the country was divided into the Eastern and Western parts, the provincial committee of the Jamiyat in East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) worked under the chairmanship of Hazrat Maulana Athar Ali Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him). The history of the struggle of the Jamiyat for an Islamic Constitution is long, for which this is not the appropriate place to elaborate, but in summary the Jamiyat, with its limited resources, through publications and speeches, having dialogues with those who held power and with the Constitutional Assembly, and also by arranging public speeches, continued its struggle to make the constitution of Pakistan Islamic, and tried to promote Islamic practices. However, the Jamiyat was weak in its district-level foundations, and there were also organizational disagreements in certain places. After taking over leadership of the Jamiyat, our respected father was concerned about making its internal branches more structured and active. He scheduled a tour of West and East Pakistan towards the end of 1955, in which the Director General of the Jamiyat Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Mateen Khateeb Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) also accompanied him. This tour had two main objectives. Firstly the draft version of the Constitution of Pakistan was in its final stages. To make it Islamic, it was necessary to cultivate people's mindsets, and in the same vein the secular forces should also be opposed at an intellectual and public level. The second objective was to create branches of the Jamiyat in various cities, and to make them united and organized.

Constitutional Tour of Punjab and NWFP with My Respected Father

I was still in Lahore, having just returned from India with my respected mother (May Allah's mercy be upon her), when our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him), together with Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Mateen Khateeb Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) and my respected brother Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Rafi Usmani Sahab (May his shade be extended), after touring various cities of Sindh and Punjab, arrived in Lahore. From here, they were scheduled to visit Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Akora Khattak, Peshawar, Mardan, and then on their return, Sargodha, Faisalabad (which was then called Lyallpur) and Sheikhupura. I wished to accompany our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) in this journey, so after getting his permission I joined them from 23 December 1955. This was the first time I was travelling farther from Lahore, and I eagerly desired to see this part of my country. It was the end of December 1955 so the cold was intense. We took a train from Lahore to Jhelum where our respected father's (May Allah's mercy be upon him) student, Hazrat Maulana Abdul Lateef Sahab, had arranged for a grand public gathering. A massive crowd congregated after Friday

prayer to which our respected father addressed, and a meeting of the Jamiyat was convened in the evening. I had entered the thirteenth year of my life and was more interested in sightseeing than the public gathering and meeting. Consequently, the next morning our respected father's *Dars-e-Quran* (Lesson of the Quran) was held but we went to visit the river Jhelum with Hazrat Khateeb Sahab. At that time huge wooden logs were floating on the river. Our hosts explained that those logs were obtained by cutting trees in the forests of Kashmir. The sellers of these logs cut the trees in Kashmir and put them in the river, and they float all the way here. Each log has a name and number inscribed on it, using which the intended recipient identifies his logs and takes them. It was my first time beholding sunrise over the river, and the scene is still fresh in my mind.

From Jhelum we departed for Rawalpindi by bus on 24 December. Hazrat Maulana Abdul Hannan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) had arranged for a public gathering during the day in the Masjid of Mohalla Workshapi, while Hazrat Maulana Ghulam Ullah Khan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) (whom I was seeing for the first time) had arranged for one at night. The gathering at night was majestic, and despite the extreme cold people sat listening intently to all the talks. Our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was the last to address the audience, and it seemed as if in this extreme cold the massive crowd of people extending as far as the eyes could see was demonstrating its zeal for an Islamic Constitution in one voice.

Our next stop was Akora Khattak. We departed by car from Rawalpindi on 25 December. When our car reached the Attock River the road was blocked, perhaps due to a train crossing. So we had to wait. A breathtaking view loomed before us. On the one hand was the confluence of Attock and Kabul rivers, and on the other hand lush mountains extended on either side of them. I had never seen such a spectacular scene in my life. At this point our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) narrated an event. He said that when we toured NWFP (present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) with Hazrat Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (May Allah's mercy be upon him) before the creation of Pakistan, our car had stopped at this very place. Looking at the beautiful view in front, Hazrat Allama (May Allah's mercy be upon him) made a wondrous remark. He said: "Do you see any order in this scene? Look, neither is the river flowing in a straight line nor do the contours of the mountains seem to have any pattern. The river is meandering across the mountains, while some mountains are high and some are low. Even the trees growing on them are not aligned in a straight line, and some are straight and some are bent. However, as a whole the view is so beautiful that one wants to look at it again and again. From this we come to know that its beauty lies in its being disordered. If one were to force a pattern and order into it, it would lose its spontaneity and innate beauty, and would degenerate into something artificial, and lose its charm."

He then continued: “In trying to find an order between verses of the Quran, people sometimes go to great lengths. However, in order to feel the innate beauty of the Quran, in reality there is no need to go to such extents to find order in its verses.”

We reached Akora Khattak at 12 noon. The following is noted in my diary of that day:

“Reached Akora at 12. A huge crowd came to receive us. The air echoed with chants of “Law of the Quran *Zindabad*”, “Mufti Muhammad Shafi *Zindabad*”, “Mufti-e-Azam *Zindabad*”, and two boys were reciting an anthem in Arabic in a very sweet voice”.

Here, Shaykhul Hadith Hazrat Maulana Abdul Haq Sahab (May Allah’s mercy be upon him) was passing on his graces through Darul Uloom Haqqania. We stayed in Hazrat’s madrasa itself. In those days Hazrat Maulana Samee Ul Haq Sahab (May his shade be extended)¹ was also studying there. I met him for the first time there through an unforgettable favour that he did to me. It transpired thus, that Akora Khattak was a model of “*husn badaawat*” (rustic beauty) in those days. Hazrat’s house in which we stayed was made of mud. In those days, the ancient Arab tradition of having a toilet inside the house being considered contemptible was still in place. We had never experienced this “*husn ghair majloob*” of “*badaawat*”². In the frigid cold night, I needed to use the toilet. The young man who appeared to be closest to my age was Maulana Samee Ul Haq Sahab himself. Due to my young age I felt embarrassed to express my need but my body was in no position to observe any formalities so I frankly told him my necessity. Signs of contemplation could be seen on his face for a few moments, but he immediately told me to follow him. In the darkness of the night, he took me by my hand through the street and on to the roof of a house. Pointing to a small room, he relieved me of my predicament. Though it somewhat felt that my action in this place was not devoid of the unscrupulousness of *wad’ush shay’i fee ghairi mahallih*³ but this was not the time to go into such subtleties, so I did not bother.

I did not get the chance to talk to him while coming but after becoming grateful to him, on our return, we exchanged introductions, and this acquaintance eventually blossomed into friendship, regarding which I will elucidate somewhere later *Inshallah*.

Hazrat Maulana Abdur Rahman Sahab Kamilpuri (May Allah’s mercy be upon him) (whom Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah used to call “*Kamil Puray*” (fully complete) was Shaykhul Hadith in Akora Khattak itself. Our beloved teacher Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May

¹ It is sad that today, when this narrative is being published, we have to write (May Allah’s mercy be upon him) instead of (May his shade be extended)

² “*Badaawat*” means rural ways of life and “*husn ghair majloob*” alludes to the couplet of Mutanabbi in which he says: حسن الحضارة مجلوب بتطرية ... وفي البداوة حسن غير مجلوب (Beauty of urban life is contrived through pampered softness, while beauty of rural life is uncontrived)

³ It means “using something inappropriately” and normally this term is used to describe “*Zulm*” (injustice).

Allah's mercy be upon him) was a student of his, and having heard about him from our respected teacher innumerable times, I yearned to meet him. Alhamdulillah this yearning was fulfilled there. This was the first and last time I meet that embodiment of *nur* (light). I mentioned to Hazrat that Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab is our beloved teacher, who is your student, and thus I am your indirect student. Hazrat smiled and dealt very kindly with me.

The next day we reached Nowshera from Akora Khattak at 9am, where a huge crowd had gathered to receive us, and the atmosphere echoed with slogans of "*Mufti-e-Azam Zindabad*" (Long Live the Grand Mufti) and "*Nazim-e-A'ala Zindabad*" (Long Live the Director General). We stayed there for only three hours, in which a huge gathering took place in the Jamay Masjid Nowshera. After Zuhr, we departed for Multan and stayed near Masjid Peeran. Maulana Midrar Ullah Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) had scheduled a meeting of the Jamiyat at Ganj Bazaar after Asar. And a public gathering was convened in Masjid Peeran after Isha. On the morning of 27 December our respected father gave a *Dars-e-Quran* (Lesson of the Quran) in the same Masjid. The same evening, at 4pm, we reached Peshawar via Charsadda. A gathering was held at night in a Masjid of Qissa Khwani Bazaar which, similar to the attendance in other gatherings, was attended by a big crowd.

This was the first time I was visiting NWFP (present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), and I remember this much that after each meal we would do rounds of bright red blood oranges. Thereafter, the famous "*Kahwah*" of Peshawar, i.e. green tea, would help digest the heaviest foods such that we would feel hungry soon after.

From Peshawar, we departed for Hatiyan by bus on 28 December. Hazrat Maulana Ghulam Ullah Khan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) had schedule to take us to his home town of "Darya Khan". From Hatiyan, we reached "Darya Khan" on a *tonga* (horse-cart). We prayed Zuhr here and enjoyed Hazrat Maulana Ghulam Ullah Khan Sahab's (May Allah's mercy be upon him) hospitality. Thereafter, again on a *tonga*, we reached Hazro where we visited Hazrat Maulana Naseerud Deen Sahab Ghorghushti (May Allah's mercy be upon him). After a successful public gathering, we departed for Campbellpur (present-day Attock) on a bus, where our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) addressed the crowd after Isha. Thereafter we headed for the train station and boarded the train for Sargodha. Hazrat Maulana Abdul Hannan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), who had accompanied our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) throughout his journeys until now, alighted at Rawalpindi Station, while we spent the night in our respected father's (May Allah's mercy be upon him) company. Our train reached Hasan Waal station while it was still dark, where a crowd had been waiting just to see our respected father since God knows when. The train stopped for only a few minutes, in which the admirers fulfilled their rights of appreciation. The

train reached Sargodha at sunrise where Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Shafi Sahab Sargodhvi (May Allah's mercy be upon him) welcomed us at the train station, along with a sizeable crowd. A great public gathering took place there as well.

The next morning, on 30th of December, we boarded the same train for Lyallpur (present-day Faisalabad), where a large crowd had come to receive us. We prayed Friday prayer in a Masjid near the *Ghanta Ghar*, where a packed gathering took place after the Friday prayer. I saw the Agriculture College of Faisalabad for the first time there. We reached Sheikhpura by bus on 31st December, and a congregation was convened after Zuhr prayer. At 4pm the same evening we returned to Lahore, and on 1st January 1956 we reached Sialkot by bus, where we stayed at the house of our paternal cousin Maulana Hamid Hassan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), and our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) addressed an assembly of scholars there. We returned to Lahore on 2nd January. Our respected father and Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Mateen Khateeb Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon them both) immediately left for a trip to East Pakistan, and did a similar whirlwind tour there, but we had missed too many classes already, so we returned to Karachi and continued our lessons, until the academic year came to an end.

Reports of these whirlwind tours of our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon them him) were published in bold headlines in newspapers, and two major benefits were achieved through them. Firstly the draft Constitution was nearing completion, and secular circles wanted to make it a secular Constitution. An atmosphere of resistance was created against these secular quarters throughout the country, and their efforts were pushed back. Secondly in order to make the Jamiyat Ulama-e-Islam active at a district level, our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon them him) had created branches of the Jamiyat throughout the places he visited, and also succeeded, to a large extent, in resolving internal disagreements and creating an atmosphere of unity among its members.¹

The untiring efforts for the Constitution of Pakistan done by our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him), Jamiyat Ulama-Islam and other religious circles in the country bore fruit to this extent that the Constitution of 1956 contained several Islamic articles. As a result, the lobby which wanted to base the constitution of the country on secular foundations suffered an overwhelming defeat, and the country was saved from the threat of becoming secular. Thereafter, it was announced that this Constitution would come into effect on 23rd March 1956. This was the same date on which the Pakistan Resolution of 1940 was passed. On this date, "Republic Day" was celebrated across the country, and the ruler of the country, instead of being called the Governor General, was called President. It would not be unreasonable to say that that was the day our nation attained complete independence. An aura of celebration engulfed

¹ These details of the tours are taken from my diary.

the entire country. Students of Darul Uloom used to prepare weekly speeches as practice exercises. That day their theme was this event itself. And I had also prepared a half-baked poem on this topic which was also read in this gathering.